

## **SIX ESSAYS: THOUGHTS CRAWLING FROM MY PLAYS**

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## **IN GOD'S WILL WE TRUST, BUT DOES GOD'S WILL CHANGE?**

**By  
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Dare we ask? Should we ask? Or has God's mind already changed and we missed out?

Here we might tread lightly. We remember the Biblical warning that God's ways are not our ways and our ways are not God's Ways. We acknowledge the Jewish adage that our arms are too short to box with God. And we all know the story of the Tower of Babel when men got too smart for its britches and its tower came falling down.

However, is it time to assess within the Jewish-Christian dialogue? All religions, even atheism and agnosticism, want to do the right thing, to foster morality and social responsibility. While persons of faith want to do the right thing pursuing the will of God, atheists and agnostics simply want to do the right thing.

Western civilization's cultural, political, and aesthetic foundations are grounded to a great extent in the ancient Greek and Roman cultures, the product of the Golden Age of Jewish, Christian and Muslim dialogue in Spain, the Renaissance and the Enlightenment. Our religious and ethical mores however are more clearly descended from the Hebrew Scriptures, which represent over a millennium of the experience and divinely inspired reflection of God's People, the Jews. Jesus' teaching, epitomized in the New Testament in the Sermon on the Mount, distills this ancient Jewish, biblical wisdom, and closely parallels the moral vision not only of the Hebrew prophets but of Jewish rabbinic tradition which reflected on the Scriptures and how to apply them in ever-changing times, much in the way the Fathers of the Church developed the biblical tradition which they held sacred.

American tradition holds to the separation of Church and State and allows for the free exchange of all views, religious and philosophical, in a pluralistic society. Some would call this a secular state, but the reality is more nuanced. The Bible, variously interpreted, is very much the underlying document upon which our moral code is based. It continues

to be a major source of light on our understanding of justice and righteousness. Our Founding Fathers, while reflecting the Enlightenment, were deeply entrenched in the moral values of Judaism and Christianity. tony

Our Declaration of Independence acknowledges faith in a Supreme God who created humankind. Those who signed it believed that they were following the laws of God, the providence of God, and the judgment of God even though, again, they acknowledged their own diversity of interpretation. It was this resolution, the celebration of diversity within an overall union of national purpose, that set the American experiment apart from all societies in human history which had preceded it. The French revolution, which did not begin until 1789, the year our Constitution was ratified by the former American colonies, sought to embody the same principle of unity within diversity, though its road to eventual success proved to be more difficult and fraught with internal violence and discord before it achieved that goal.

While God is not mentioned in the US Constitution, God is mentioned today in the constitutions of nearly all of our fifty states, and all territories mention God, sometimes as often as ten times. Every American President has taken his oath of office on at least one Bible, and President Obama took his oath of office on two Bibles, one belonging to Martin Luther King, Jr., and the other to Abraham Lincoln, arguably the most biblically literate President in US History. Although Lincoln joined no Church, he mentioned God at least three thousand times by one count in his speeches, and made no secret of the fact that the Bible (along with the works of William Shakespeare) was his favorite book. One cannot read his Second Inaugural Address, probably the most significant in American history, without understanding its biblical references, allusions with which his original audience was well aware, since they were in the main steeped in the Scriptures themselves.

It cannot be denied therefore that the Bible is the foundation of the understanding of truth and justice in Western civilization in general and in the United States in particular. But we also know that this document has been used through the ages as a basis for justifying a wide variety of points of view. We have relied on those who speak with authority, knowledge about how to interpret biblical passages which sometimes they had, and sometimes they merely asserted they had. Many of the issues that divide society throughout the world are often defended on the basis of the Bible. These include stances on gay/lesbian marriage, polygamy, divorce, ordination of women, abortion, capitol punishment and numerous others.

There are, as commonly understood, two main views of God's will. One is that God's will is unbending and unchanging. Another is that God's will changes over time. How do we reconcile those passages which state that God does not change, with others that seem to suggest that God's will alters over time?

Jewish-Christian Theology is largely based on God speaking to the human race through Scripture--the Bible, the human heart, prophets and religious leaders. In Genesis, God changes his mind about destroying the human race in the flood, promising, and creating

the rainbow as a sign of the divine promise, never to do so again. God reconciles Himself to human evil and sets about creating a special people, the children of Abraham and Sarah, the Jews, to be a people especially dedicated to observing God's teachings and thereby be a witness to and a blessing for all of humanity.

Instead of presuming human goodness, God realizes that it will take many generations of divine teaching, patience, justice and mercy to raise this people to the level of faithfulness to the divine will that He originally hoped humanity would attain from the beginning. God allows Abraham to argue with him to save the righteous few in Sodom when He had originally planned to destroy the whole city. And God, in one of the most profound, and to this day still much discussed and variously interpreted passages in the Bible, orders Abraham to sacrifice his son and heir, Isaac, only to stay Abraham's hand at the last moment. Was this God's plan all along? Or did the willingness to suffer of Abraham and Isaac move the divine heart so that God changed his mind about what he had originally commanded Abraham to do?

Likewise, the commandments of the Law given by God to Moses changed with time. The changes reflected the differing circumstances of tribal societies, early farming settlements, and more urban settings. One has only to compare the earlier versions of the many commandments (the ten but many others as well) in Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers with those given in Deuteronomy (literally, the Second Law) to see what amounts to an evolution of the divine will and commandments from the earlier versions of the Law with the Pentateuch to the later. Both rabbinic and Christian commentators over the centuries have worked hard to reconcile these different versions of the Law. Modern biblical scholars would not that the essential moral and spiritual principles remained the same but that specific laws changed to reflect the changing circumstances of the people of God as the many centuries of human experience reflected in the Bible passed, one into another over time.

Though the New Testament was written over a much shorter period of time, approximately a single century rather than a millennium, one can see such evolution of views in it as well. The Epistle to the Hebrews, written after the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE, addresses the issue of how to observe the biblical commandments without a temple within which to offer sacrifice. Its author argues that the sacrifice of Jesus more than compensates for temple offerings. In the same period, of course, Jewish tradition was developing its own theory that study of the Bible, prayer and good works were sufficient sacrifices to God, in this following and expanding on the biblical prophets such as Amos. God, having in the past spoken to the fathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, the author of Hebrews argues, had something new to say through Jesus. He implies, with good biblical precedent, as we have seen, that God's will for humanity does change over time, as humanity changes and, we would say, evolves.

Other examples from over the course of post biblical Jewish and Christian history are not difficult to find. A few will be briefly mentioned here.

## USURY

In the Middle Ages, Christians interpreted the biblical commandment against lending money at exorbitant interest (which we would call usury) to prohibit lending any money at interest. Various decrees first allowed it, and then prohibited it.

In one period, both Jews and Christians interpreted the biblical commandment against lending money at interest to one's fellows as meaning that Jews should not lend money to Jews and Christians not to Christians. With this new interpretation, both believed that they could lend money at interest to people outside of their own community. In Renaissance Italy, taking advantage of this, Jews and Christians worked together to create the basis of the modern banking system. Changing times had brought new needs and possibilities, and the one word of God was reinterpreted to fit them. Ultimately, the commandment was interpreted yet again to prohibit lending money at high interest rates that would impoverish the debtor, and the financial basis for modern capitalism was established. Usury remained prohibited, in accordance with the intent of the biblical law, but banking was allowed.

## SLAVERY

Although not laden with race, the entirety of the old and new testament are filled with examples of slavery. The Hebrew Scriptures contain many laws which give slaves rights, among them the Law of the Jubilee Year, in which all slaves were to be freed. Jesus of Nazareth took on the priestly establishment with an action which would have been cheered on by the group in first century Judaism with whom he was in closest contact, the Pharisees. Many of his teachings reflect and are parallel to those of the two main Pharisaic schools of thought of his time, the schools of Hillel and Shammai. Jesus drove the money changers out of the Temple, and the chief priests, as all three of the Synoptic gospels agree in virtually the same language, began to plot against him. Pontius Pilate, who controlled the priesthood entirely, having appointed Caiaphas as his chief collaborator, saw in the popularity of Jesus with the Jewish people a potential source of Jewish revolution against Roman rule, and so executed him. Jesus boldly paid with his life for probing interpretations of Jewish Law and for being one around whom rebellious Jews might gather. He would have supported the biblical laws which strove to make slavery relatively humane. **But he did not condemn slavery.** "That servant who knew his master's will but did not make preparations nor act in accord with his will shall be beaten severely" (Luke 12:47). "No disciple is not above his teacher, no slave above his master" (Matthew 10:24).

**St Paul's epistles called for slaves to "obey their masters."** St Peter's letters appear to suggest that it was **commendable for Christian slaves to suffer willingly at the hands of cruel masters** In several Pauline epistles, and the First Epistle of Peter, slaves are admonished to obey their masters, as to the Lord, and not to men; however masters were told to serve their slaves "in the same way" and "even better" as "brothers" and not to threaten them as God is their Master as well. This latter admonition reflects the Law of the Hebrew Scriptures in just treatment of slaves.

The Epistle to Philemon was used by pro-slavery advocates as well as by abolitionists. Paul writes that he is returning Onesimus, a fugitive slave, back to his master Philemon; and entreats Philemon to regard him not as a slave but as a beloved brother in Christ.

Jesus of Nazareth took on the entirety of the Israel's establishment, but did not condemn slavery. Both Peter and Paul likely were martyred for their evangelizing, but neither condemned slavery. God's will as expressed in the Hebrew Scriptures affirmed the institution of slavery as it existed at the time. Regarding the emancipation of slaves, Jewish slaves were to be freed in the seventh year, the Jubilee Year, reflecting in years the seven day cycle of Creation in Genesis 1, when the Lord rested and when all humanity must rest, according to both Deuteronomy and Exodus. In addition the Hebrew Scriptures contain laws regarding punishment for the one who kills slave as well as injunctions to avoid injuring the eyes and teeth.

Exodus Says” And if a man smite his servant, or his maid, with a rod, and he die under his hand; he shall be surely punished. Notwithstanding, if he continues a day or two, he shall not be punished: for he is his money." And "And if a man smite the eye of his servant, or the eye of his maid, that it perish; he shall let him go free for his eye's sake. And if he smite out his manservant's tooth, or his maidservant's tooth; he shall let him go free for his tooth's sake." Leviticus prohibited enslaving over other Israelites, but allowed for Gentile slaves.

Sadly, the Christians in American history used certain biblical passages to justify the practice, and did observe the spirit of the biblical laws which saw slaves as fully human and worthy of respect. Slavery, though acknowledges as a valid societal norm in the bible, and regulated as such, is however totally condemned today throughout the world and especially in the Jewish and Christian tradition as a violation of God's will, even though sanctioned in their scriptures.

## **MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE**

The laws of marriage and divorce changed many times in the Bible. Moses provided for the possibility of a man divorcing his wife, in certain circumstances. It was not an easy matter, because in the Hebrew Scriptures, as in the New Testament, marriage is a covenant, reflective of the unbreakable covenant between God and the People of God. In the centuries before Jesus there was a disagreement over how to interpret the biblical Law in this regard. The School of Hillel was relatively lenient, giving fairly wide reasons for divorce. The School of Shammai interpreted the Law more strictly, rendering it next to impossible. Jesus, when asked, sided with the Pharisaic school of Shammai in this instance, and went a bit beyond even their strictness, making it next to impossible. Many Christian and Jewish groups today allow for divorce and remarriage. The Catholic Church allows for divorce when the married couple cannot reasonably live together, but does not allow for remarriage. It views the covenant between man and wife as a symbol and sign of the unbreakable covenant between God and the People of God. This would make remarriage technically adultery, which is not condoned by any branch of Judaism or Christianity.

Polygamy has its own history. Jewish tradition has never banned polygamy outright, because it was practiced by the Patriarchs. Technically, it has not been banned outright, but banned “temporarily,” i.e. for the next millennium (depending on the interpretation). Up to the 1940’s some Jewish groups, such as the Jews of Yemen, continued to practice polygamy. When they migrated to the new Jewish state of Israel, its high court ruled that those who had brought more than one wife could keep them, but marry no others, nor were their sons to be allowed to marry more than one wife. On the Christian side, when the Mormons accepted and encouraged polygamy they like the Jews had to look no further than the biblical patriarchs and kings. Abraham had plural wives, as did King David and King Solomon supposedly had 7000 wives. But by the time of Jesus and earlier, reflected in the later strata of the bible, the ideal was no longer polygamy but monogamy. The Bible in Genesis says that God’s original intention was for one man to be married to only one woman: “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife.” .

#### **ANIMAL SACRIFICE:**

The first record in the Bible of animal sacrifices was at the gate of the Garden of Eden.” In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the LORD. But Abel brought fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. The LORD looked with favor on Abel and his offering, but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor, suggests that this offering of sacrifices was a recurring event. It is actually implied in Genesis 3:21 where it says, "The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them." The clothing of skins with which God covered Adam and Eve presumably came from animals that were killed.

Why did the Lord look with favor on Abel's sacrifice and did not look with favor on Cain's offering? It was because the sacrifice of "the firstborn of his flock" carried a symbolism certainly known and understood by both Cain and Abel. It was an acted out prophecy of a coming Savior who would give His life to save the human race.

Offerings of clean animals were offered by Noah after the flood when the ark came to rest on the top of Mt. Ararat Later Abraham built altars and offered sacrifices in the land of Canaan ( ).When Israel escaped from their slavery in Egypt, they came to Mt. Sinai. There God gave them instructions to build a tent tabernacle they would carry as a portable meeting place while they were on their way to the Promised Land of Canaan. This tent tabernacle and its services were designed to give Israel an object lesson of the plan of salvation God had put in place "before the creation of the world" (1 Peter 1:20.) Such stories reflect and provide a sacred history for the practice of animal sacrifice in the Temple of Jerusalem.

In the Christian understanding of salvation God sent His Son to be born into the human race, to live a perfect life and then die on the cross as a sacrifice in expiation for the sins of all humanity. His sacrifice, Christians believe, was foretold by the slaying of lambs and other animals in the tabernacle services. Each morning and each evening a lamb was killed on the altar of burnt offerings. In the springtime at the Passover celebration, the

Passover lamb was killed. The Hebrew word for Passover is Pesach, from which Christians derive the word, "Paschal," seeing Jesus as the Paschal lamb the blood of which daubed on the doorways of the Jews in Egypt saved them from the angel of death who came to kill all of the firstborn sons of the Egyptians, a divine show of force to convince the Pharaoh to let God's people go out of slavery and into the Land promised to them by God. Jews who could, in Jesus' time, would go to Jerusalem to sacrifice a lamb in the temple and to consume with the Passover meal. The Synoptics set the Last Supper as a Passover meal and this as the reason Jesus went into Jerusalem: to celebrate there the Passover and consume the Pesach/Paschal lamb.

John the Baptist as a Jew understood this symbolism. When He saw Jesus passing by he said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" Paul understood the meaning of the sacrifice of Christ similarly, for he said, "For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed."

When the Temple was destroyed in 70 of the Common Era Christians, who according to the book of Acts continued to offer sacrifices in the Temple after the resurrection of Jesus, like Jews, no longer had a place in which to offer the prescribed sacrifices. Christians, as we saw, believe Jesus' sacrifice more than compensates for the inability to continue offering sacrifices in the Temple. Rabbinic Judaism believes study of the law, prayer and good deeds compensate, making the righteousness of one's life a fitting sacrifice to the God of Israel.

## **HOMOSEXUALITY**

The Bible specifically prohibits homosexuality in a couple of places. However, unlike adultery, which is included in the Ten Commandments, homosexuality is not included in the biblical summaries of the most serious covenant-breaching sins. And there are no stories about homosexuality parallel to those in which the sin of adultery, for example David's with Bathsheba, cause serious problems for the People of Israel, incurring the righteous anger of the God of Israel.

St. Paul, in a later time likely reflects a growing abhorrence of Greek and Roman practice with regard to sexual relations with young boys, thoroughly condemned the practice. The Romans and the Greeks did not condemn homosexuality. Paul's references to homosexual acts were not particularly controversial to early Christians who knew that the holiness code of Leviticus forbade homosexual acts (Leviticus 20:13). Paul was reaffirming that which was held by faithful Jews and early Christians. We have no evidence that there was a movement afoot in Corinth to press for wider acceptance of same-sex activity. Paul does not single out homosexuality but refers to it within a list of other acts that were accepted as idolatrous but were now to be left behind by those who had chosen Jesus. So, although Paul might not be considered homophobic in the way we today would understand the term, he was clearly against any form of homosexual activity.

Jesus of Nazareth did not condemn homosexuality. St. Augustine was a practicing homosexual for a year and likely had a lover, but turned vehemently against it.

**Capital Punishment.** Leviticus 20:2–27 provides a list of transgressions in which execution is recommended. Christian positions on these passages vary. In the New Testament, Jesus uses the example of those who killed the king's son. The king in turn retaliated by killing the guests who did not attend the wedding feast. Indeed Jesus' Death and Resurrection would not have taken place because he would have been sent to prison had there been no capital punishment. Rabbinic tradition, interpreting the biblical laws for new times and with new insights, gradually made capital punishment harder and harder to enforce, so that by the time the Talmud was set down, it was in effect practically impossible. The Jewish State of Israel, though it considers itself, understandably, as besieged by enemies, has condemned only one person to death, making capital punishment, while possible, in practice not a real option. That person, of course, was the man in the glass booth, a chief perpetrator of the Holocaust. Most Christian countries of Europe today no longer practice capital punishment. It is a strong position of most Christian Denominations that capital punishment should be banned everywhere.

### **SINS OF THE FATHER**

It seems to have been a practice in some parts of the ancient world until a shift was indicated by Ezekiel. Once, God's will seemed to indicate that the sins of the fathers could be passed on to the children. While we notice parental traits being passed from one generation to the next and in family lines indeed, God speaking through Ezekiel, indicated that henceforth each human would be judged on his own actions rather than those of his father. What seems to have been acceptable earlier in biblical times was no longer so after Ezekiel.

### **RETALIATION**

The prophets, spokesmen for God evolved. God evolved from a God of power to a God of love.

“But if there is harm, then you shall pay life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe. Then you shall do to him as he had meant to do to his brother. So you shall purge the evil from your midst. And the rest shall hear and fear, and shall never again commit any such evil among you. your eye shall not pity. It shall be life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.

There are only three cases in which the *lex talionis* is referred to. In each, it is meant to restrict people's urge for vengeance to a more just sense of retributive justice. In context, the ancient saying, common in the societies around Israel, is appealed to, but most scholars would agree was not to be taken literally, but rather meant to show the seriousness of the matter at hand, as for example when two men are fighting and they harm a pregnant woman. If the child within her survives, then there is a monetary compensation for the harm done to her. If the child dies, then the matter is much more



serious, akin in fact to murder of the child, so a more severe punishment is exacted. It is not however a literal “eye for an eye,” of course, since neither of the men could be pregnant, so a literal interpretation of the dictum would be impossible.

Jesus likewise uses the phrase more symbolically than literally, to make a deeper point. “You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ But I say to you, do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. Give to the one who begs from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you. Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all.” Responding to evil with goodness is attested in the Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament. Taken seriously, it would lead to a life of what we would today call pacifism, as indeed many of the first Christians so understood it. The early Christian practice of non-violence, however, gave way to the theory of justifiable war when Christianity gained power in the Roman Empire.

## **WINE**

**Drunkenness is condemned but wine is extolled throughout the Bible.** Alcoholic beverages appear in biblical literature, from Noah planting a vineyard and becoming inebriated in the Hebrew Bible, to Jesus in the New Testament miraculously making copious amounts of wine at the marriage at Cana and later incorporating wine as part of the Eucharist. Wine is the most common alcoholic beverage mentioned in biblical literature, where it is a source of symbolism,<sup>1</sup> and was an important part of daily life in biblical times. Additionally, the inhabitants of ancient Israel drank beer, and wines made from fruits other than grapes, and references to these appear in scripture

Biblical literature displays ambivalence toward intoxicating drinks, considering them both a blessing from God that brings joy and merriment and potentially dangerous beverages that can be sinfully abused. The relationships between Judaism and alcohol and Christianity and alcohol have generally maintained this same tension, though Christianity saw a number of its adherents, particularly around the time of Prohibition, rejecting alcohol as evil. The original versions of the books of the Bible use several different words for alcoholic beverages: at least three in Hebrew, and five in Greek. Drunkenness is discouraged and not infrequently portrayed, and some biblical persons abstained from alcohol. Alcohol is used symbolically, in both positive and negative terms. Its consumption is prescribed for religious rites or medicinal uses in some places.

## **ABORTION**

The Bible neither supports nor opposes abortion or birth control. The issue arises as a serious one only with the advent of modern medicine. Abortion is not mentioned as such in the Bible.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The first is that God's Law, its understanding and application, changed and evolved over the course of time in which the Scriptures were written, and that rabbinic and Christian traditions have changed over the centuries as well as new questions have arisen and new situations needed to be faced. Changing specifics has often proven the best way of adhering to the substance and spirit of a given law. Animal sacrifice, divorce, polygamy, and so on are just some examples. The second is that people do change their minds about what they think, often in response to changing scientific knowledge or public demands. The Bible is and will always remain a major source of justification and righteousness. But if we believe God's will is also written in our hearts and enough people think so then perhaps we should reassess and see where we go. In conclusion, we do not know but are simply beginning a discussion. And again we may revert to another source of God's knowledge. What God writes is in our hearts (cf. Jeremiah 31). And we can try more prayer and more dialogue.

### **LEGACY OF THE JEWISH KINGS**

I would like to acknowledge help from Dr. Eugene Fisher. . The opinions expressed are of course entirely my own."

Jewish Kings:

Legacies of Monarchs come and go. But these three have had an influence greater than any one else. Legacies of monarch come and go. Few leave a really important imprint on humanity. Some in the region. Charlemagne, Caesar.

1. First, their legacy touches all Muslims, Christians, and Jews. That covers 2.5 billion people on the planet.
2. Second, the Wisdom of Solomon,
3. Third, the psalms of David and Solomon to this day are uttered through the planet.
4. Fourth, the legacy of the state of Israel.
5. Trying to carve a kingdom still a problem. Their influence on mankind has indeed been profound

The three men have much in common. All three had a direct calling, had either direct Revelation from a prophet or spoke to God divine inspiration. All were endowed with much intelligence. Look at. All three sinned, and had many faults. In addition, their lives tell stories of conquests and tragedies. Superb novels. All had divine calling. Intelligence looks. All three sinned. All had a problem with their children. All three built Israel, and were all aware of their calling. Also, lessons in retributions by God. All died unhappily. All had a major impact.

Why are we interested. Their roles in world history tell us much about governance. God did not want a king but the people insisted on one even after being told that they would have to give up many rights, but the people seeing how their neighbors' fought and were protected wanted a young king like they had. God really warned them all so badly, but the people persisted. In the end Samuel finally gave up in desperation.

Finally God chose one. But guess what? He chooses Saul and then realizes he made a big mistake. Called in for a new one Got David—who became his favorite. And from his loins would come the savior of mankind

### Why Chosen

All three men were remarkable, physically and intellectually.  
God did not want to have his people ruled by kings. Here is what he told Samuel

They were to govern themselves with God's direction. Israel was ruled by Judges including Samson, Othniel, Ehud, Shagmar Deborah Gideon Abimelech Tola Yair Jephthah Ibzan Elon Abdon Samson eli Samuel. The judges ruled well. Specially Samuel. But the people still demand a king. Why. They observed their neighbors remember Israel was not a contiguous nation

### Relationship to God

All three kings had different relationship with. Their stories are compelling.

Saul Chosen by God but a mistake. To be sure, according to old testament writers God absolutely did not want the Israelites to have a king He warned them through his prophet Samuel that

David chosen by God, behaved badly, but not a mistake

Solomon chosen by Bathsheba's self, and she hounded her husband. But Solomon fulfilled the divine mission of building the temple

1. David loved most by God. But God did not speak directly to him. Only spoke y flaws. through Samuel and Nathan.
2. Solomon, chosen by God to build the temple. Also favored by God for his humility. But later abandoned God. Kingdom divided in half at this death.
3. Saul first chosen, then abandoned by God. Remarkable youth. But lost favor.
4. David loved God the most. Constantly praying for forgiveness. Wrote beautiful poetry in tribute to God.

### Defects

Saul melancholy Jealousy Insecure, Vengeful, Impatient lacking in Wisdom, little faith Hatred, lacking common sense, not politically astute

David Lust, ambition Willing to murder, stealth love of power

Solomon ostentatious love of women arrogant privileged

### Strengths

Saul fighter resolute Love of God  
David, Faith, Humbled. Love Wise political genius  
Solomon wise, resolute gets job done

### Legacies

Wisdom, faith military forgiveness

### Enemies

Saul Samuel, David Jonathan, Michael, Abner, Sons of Saul, House of Jesse

David, Saul Michal Absalom, Job Nathaniel

Solomon 2 brothers, God Joab Rehoam Abiathar

### Killings

David 200 philistines, Absalom, Goliath

Saul Philistines

Solomon 2 brothers Joab

### Friends

Solomon Michael, Queen of Sheba Bathsheba other brothers David Jonathan, wives

Nathaniel Mephibosheth

Saul Abner

### Sons

Solomon

David

Solomon

### Legacy

David State of Israel, Jewish people psalms religion

Solomon Wisdom Songs of Songs

Saul The tragedy

Jesus quoted David on Cross

Israel had been led by an array of figures, starting with the patriarchs, followed by enslavement in Egypt, and then liberation under Moses. In one strand, as mentioned, the people demand a king, doing so in defiance of God, who had in effect been their king. God therefore takes the demand as a repudiation of Him leading to the eventually fatal opposition between God and Saul. In the other strand, God himself initiates kingship. While here, too, Saul loses the confidence of God, his fall is not fated.

In both strands, Saul eventually fails and loses the support of his subjects and God. He suffers from lack of confidence, from rivals, and from overwhelming enemy forces. He sees enemies everywhere, including David, who becomes his successor, and his own son, Jonathan. He becomes paranoid and ends up committing assisted suicide in a failed battle. He is a tragic figure.

It is not what Saul or David actually does. It is what each of them wishes to do: kill the other.

Taken straightforwardly, the life of Saul is about a nation. Saul's troubled personality is noteworthy only because of his position. Taken psychoanalytically, his life is about a family. Taken straightforwardly, the conflicts in his life are with Samuel, David, Jonathan, and God. T

The conflict between Saul and David begins with David's slaying of Goliath. Jealous of David's success not only over Goliath but also subsequently - the women sing "Saul has slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands" - Saul nearly kills him himself but, instead, as David does to Bathsheba's husband, plots to send David to the front to be killed by the Philistines.

Saul is "afraid" of David, recognising that the spirit of God now resides in David: "The Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David from that day forward". The attempt to have David killed is a preventive act: he fears being killed himself.

The love quadrangle among Samuel, Saul, David, and Jonathan evinces the conflict at work. Samuel loves Saul as an adopted son and bemoans his downfall. Yet he also fears being killed by Saul. In turn, Saul feels abandoned by the father-like Samuel. Saul loves David as a son yet fears being killed by him, his own adopted son, as well as by his own son, Jonathan.

David loves Saul as a father yet likewise fears being killed by him. Saul's "adoption" of David parallels the adoption of the king as "son" by God. God feels betrayed, even if not threatened, by Saul. Saul in turn feels abandoned by God as well as by Samuel, as the departing of God's spirit from him attests.

Seemingly, Saul's fate is determined by God. It is God who chooses Saul, even if in one strand through a lottery, and it is God who abandons Saul for David. Seemingly, the story is about the divinely determined rise and fall of Saul. Seemingly, there is nothing unconscious at work. Saul is all too conscious of his ambivalent feelings towards David. The hint is Saul's offer of two of his daughters to David in marriage. Because Saul calculates that David's marriage to either daughter will lead to David's death, marriage

within the family is the means by which Saul kills his adopted son. The scheme is a mere twist on the father killing his son to prevent marriage within the family. A further sexual aspect of the conflict between David and Saul is that women repeatedly side with David against Saul. Questionable

He deserves to be abandoned, as do Samuel's sons, who had hoped to succeed their father as judges. Read à la Raglan, sin is an "added-on" explanation. The real reason that Samuel and his sons, and in turn Saul and his sons, lose their places is that they have become weak - physically, not morally. Samuel is old, and Saul is unstable. They are ineffective, failing as they do to defeat Israel's enemies.

B " This infusion of God in Saul even certifies Saul as king. Whenever God is with Saul, the spirit of God "comes mightily upon him". God's abandonment of Saul means the departure of God's spirit from Saul.

Resigned to abandonment, Saul meets the Philistines "head on". Wounded, he dies by suicide. Three of his sons, including Jonathan, are killed by the Philistines. cause is Saul's sinning.

CROWD

You select one for us.

SAMUEL

In anticipation of your demand for a king, I have prayed to God and he has answered me.

CROWD

YEAH! YEAH! YEAH!

SAMUEL

Hear what the voice of God told me.

CROWD

Yes! Yes !! Yes!

SAMUEL

Hearken to the voice of the people in all that they say to you. For they have not rejected you, but me, that I should not reign over them.

CROWD

We love the Lord!

SAMUEL

God then said: "According to all their works, they have done from the day that I brought

them out of Egypt until this day: as they have forsaken me, and served strange gods, so do they also unto you.

CROWD

Forgive us, Lord

SAMUEL

And then the Lord said: Now, therefore, hearken to their voice: but yet testify to them, and foretell them the right of the king, that shall reign over them”

CROWD

Yes! Yes! Yes!

SAMUEL

My People: This will be the right of the king that shall reign over you: He will take your sons, and put them in his chariots, and will make them his horsemen, and his running footmen, to run before his chariots, and he will appoint of them to be his tribunes, and his centurions, and to plough his fields, and to reap his corn, and to make him arms and chariots. Your daughters also he will take to make him ointments, and to be his cooks, and bakers.

CROWD

We still want a king. We still want a king. We still want a king

SAMUEL

Let me continue: He will take your fields, and your vineyards, and your best olive yards, and give them to his servants.

CROWD

We want a king!

SAMUEL

Moreover he will take the tenth of your corn, and of the revenues of your vineyards, to give to his eunuchs and servants. Your servants also, and handmaids, and your goodliest young men, and your asses, he will take away, and put them to his work. Your flocks also he will tithe, and you shall be his servants

CROWD

We want a king.

SAMUEL

And you shall cry out in that day from the face of the king, whom you have chosen to yourselves: and the Lord will not hear you in that day, because you desired unto yourselves a king.

LEADER

Nay: but there shall be a king over us, and we also will be like all nations: and our king shall judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles for us.

SAMUEL

You have spoken. I hear you . I will Harken to your voice, and give you a king.

CROWD

RAH! RAH! RAH! RAH!

#### IMMORALITY IN THE BIBLE

The Bible is our Good book. The Judeo Christian tradition relies on it heavily to define our oral code and moral precepts. The whole basis for constitution after constitution is

that the Decalogue and the patriarchs, prophets, even kings and of course Jesus of Nazareth provided our back bone for leadership. The bible is total believable because the characters are real. None are without sin, unlike the Christian saints, consequently much more interesting

Adam and Eve.

The first sinners were held accountable for their sin of disobedience by God. They disobeyed. As a result men were born into original sin. Changed with Christ.  
Satan

Cain and Abel. Cain killed Abel. God showed us sin. Jealousy, hatred, lack of faith in God

Noah got drunk.

Abraham many sins cowardice presented wife as sister sent slave woman into the desert

Sarah was mean spirited bitch. Passed herself off as a slut Mean! She threw out slave woman with a bag of stones

Rebecca pulled wool over husband's eyes a terrible mother.

Isaac lethargic

Jacob a real bastard. Feisty lied to father lied to father in law lied to brother chosen by God smart wrestled with God outsmarted by father in law a cousin of his own mother.

Rachel lied to father goodwife loved Jacob dies in childbirth

Abigail culprit

Esau Sold his birthright for a bowl of bean soup sinful Gave parents trouble.

Twelve Sons

Moses Joshua

Samuel

Samson

Judith

Saul

David

Solomon

All the kings

Elisha

Jonah

Isaiah

Jeremiah

Unlike Icons and Saints who are faultless, the ancient Jewish writers these people were humans with warts and all.

Lincoln Essay



## LINCOLN AS THE MOST RELIGIOUS PRESIDENT IN AMERICAN HISTORY

1. Attended church regularly
2. declared his Christian faith
3. Attended biweekly prayer service
4. Gurley came often to the white house to advise President
5. children and family also attended
6. Better understanding and literacy in Bible than any other
7. Phineas Gurley to become church member on Easter Sunday
8. Paid dues
9. All speeches mention God.
10. Three major speeches
11. Gettysburg
12. First Inaugral Address
13. Second inaugualr address
14. Visit to the Holy Lland.
15. Willie's gift

Abraham Lincolns religion has been the subject of must interest through the years for several reasons. First Lincoln is our ors Iconic president. Over 20 thousand books more than all other American Presidents combined. Has become an industry

Why the interst. Many other presidnts. Only perpiapl. First, the tmost tragic period in our history. Second, the thought that lIncoln joined no church, the third, is that since our most

What do we mean by religious.

1. Part of a church
2. His writing
3. mentioning God
4. in the wrting
5. knowledge of bible

I believe the Bible is the best gift God has ever given man. All the good from the Savior of the world is communicated to us through this book. But for it we could not know right from wrong.

It is the duty of nations as well as men to recognize the truth announced in Holy Scripture and proven by all of history that those nations only are blessed whose God is the Lord

16.